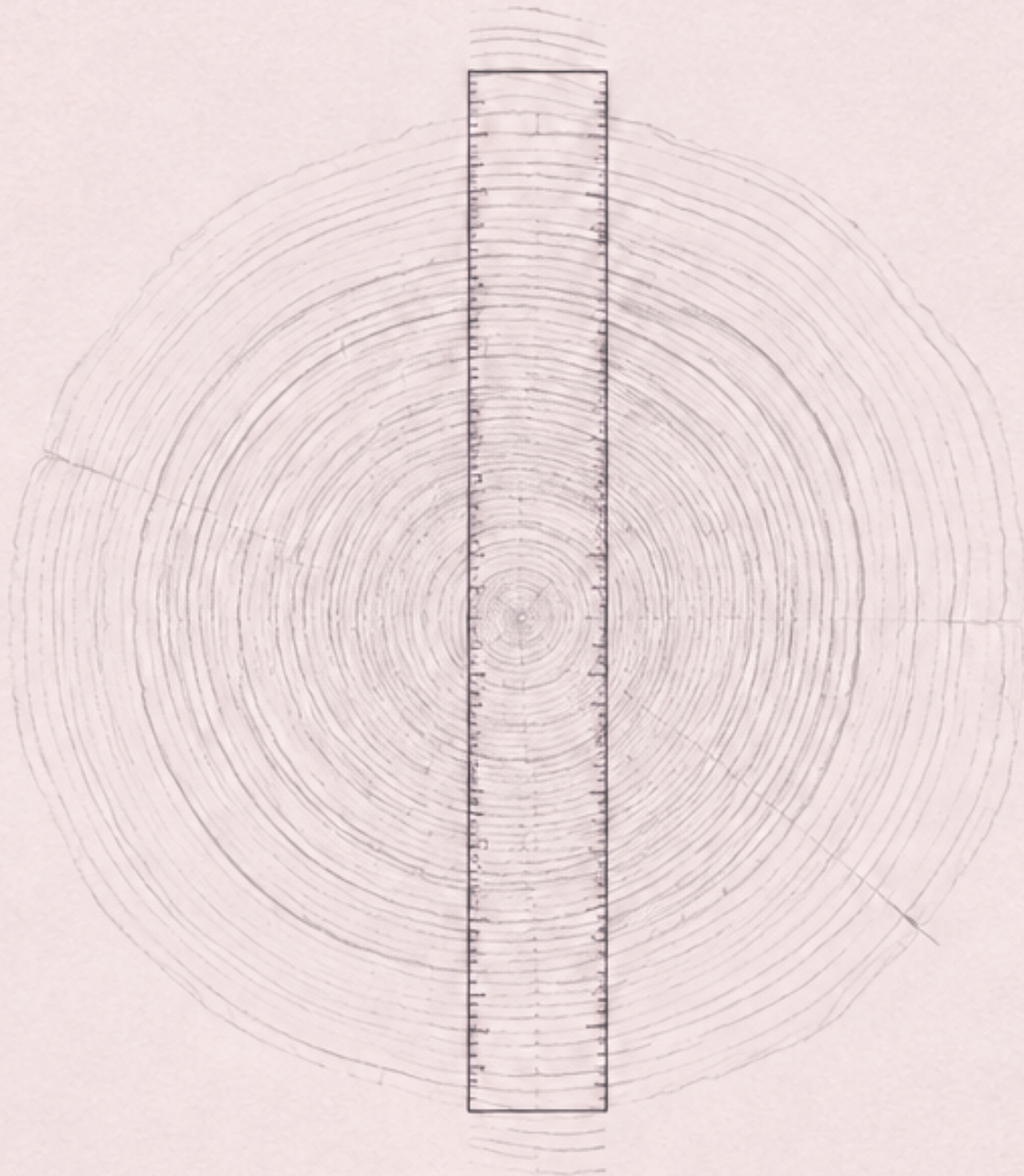


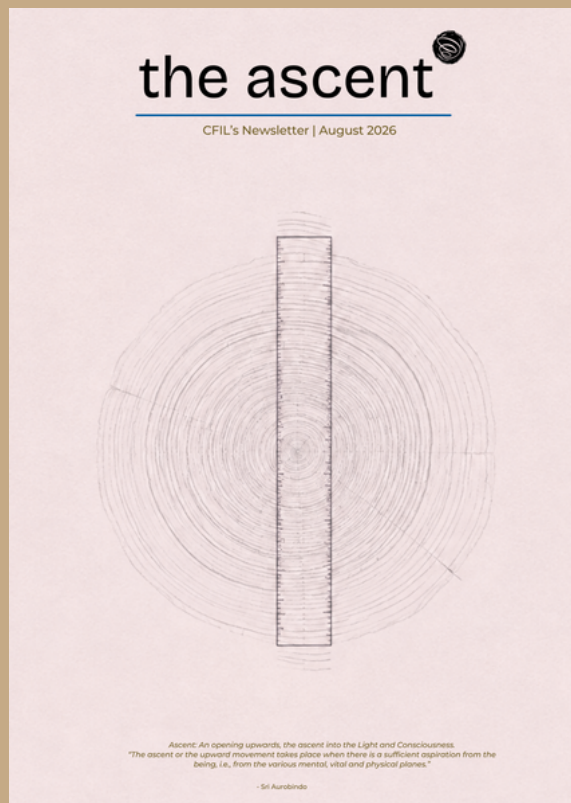
the ascent[®]

CFIL's Newsletter | August 2026



*Ascent: An opening upwards, the ascent into the Light and Consciousness.
"The ascent or the upward movement takes place when there is a sufficient aspiration from the being, i.e., from the various mental, vital and physical planes."*

- Sri Aurobindo



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Lavlesh Bhanot
Editor



Tanya Ganguly
Graphic Designer

Each month becomes another step in what we are building together. Happy to share that with this issue, we have **completed one full year of publication**.

August is the month where festivities begin for the rest of the year. While the rigor continued, we started to expand our artistic faculty in decorating, painting, and planting plants at our campus. The month was busy and marked by celebrations.

The cover image depicts how the label Gen Z isolates and measures one segment of an otherwise continuous civilizational journey. The growth rings remind us that every generation remains rooted in the culture, history and consciousness it inherits.

The article on **'The Gen-Z Conundrum'** questions the global framing of 'Gen Z' and examines how digital culture, language, work, attention, and lifestyle are reshaping a generation. It asks whether the way forward lies not in further labeling but in reconnecting young people with cultural roots, self-mastery, and a reimagined approach to education and parenting.

In **India, that is Bharat** series, Sri Aurobindo's writing explores why the Gita must be understood not as an abstract spiritual text but as a teaching born in the midst of a profound human crisis. It examines the significance of Kurukshetra and Arjuna's inner conflict to understand how spirituality, ethics, and action come together in the realities of life.

Invitation to Notice draws our attention to how our gadgets can occupy our mental space even when we are not using them. The mere presence of a device nearby can subtly distract us and reduce the attention available for the task at hand.

In **Reflections and trends**, we explore whether AI, while making writing faster and easier, may also be quietly making expression more uniform across cultures. It raises an important question: as language becomes increasingly AI-assisted, are we also at risk of losing cultural nuance, identity and distinct ways of seeing the world?

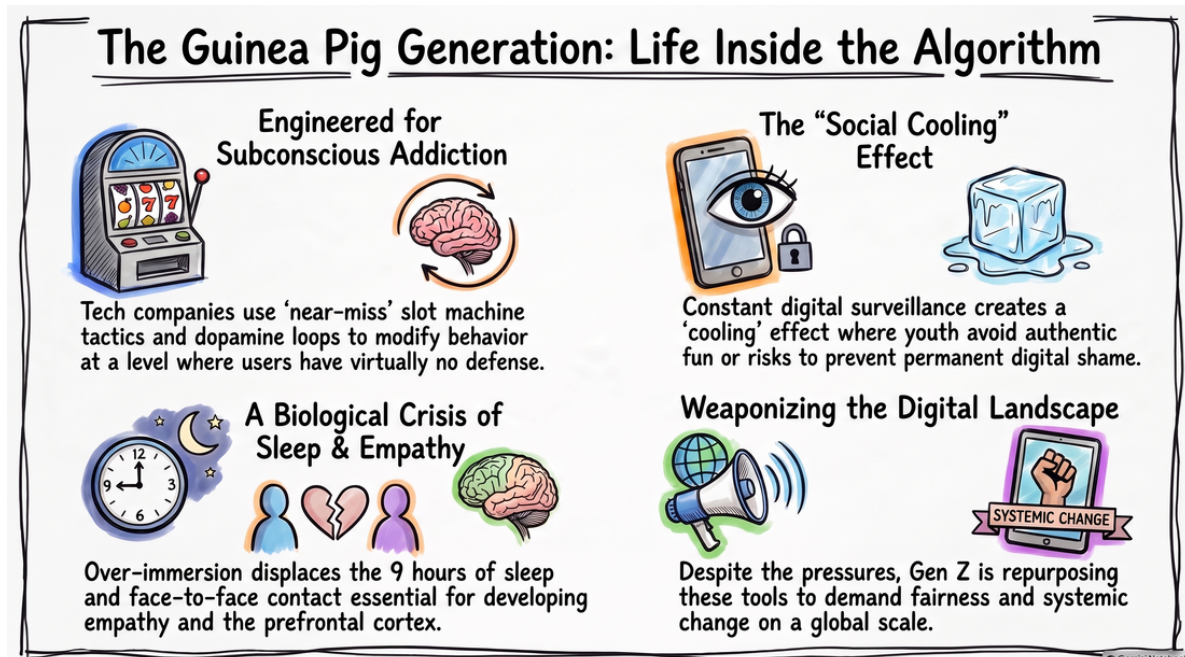
We have now completed nine episodes of **Integral Dialogues**, our YouTube channel. We are delighted to share a brief summary of what these conversations explored, and we encourage you to engage with these pertinent and timely issues.

We continue to share what Granthali captures through her camera. This time, her lens turns to butterflies and the delicate beauty they add to the natural world.

In September, we are likely to finalise the planning for our Sports Day performances and continue with the rigor and momentum we built through August across all our efforts.

-Editor

The Gen-Z conundrum



'Gen-Z' is not an Indian term. It is a global term that represents an effort to categorize the population born within a specific time frame. When we say Gen-Z, we are standardizing traits and attitudes across countries and cultures. So the effort is to generalize and standardize a certain segment of population. It is a divisive effort to segment a civilizational consciousness; however, this approach overlooks a crucial aspect: it severs the cultural roots of the generation to which it pertains. A particular generation inherits certain traits rather than bringing them with them. You do not create the culture, way of life, or beliefs of the time you were born into.

Profiling of the so-called Gen Z suggests that they are 'digital natives'—that is, they are incubated in a technological world. This generation is characterized by a deficiency in attention, however born with an ability to multitask, such as solving a difficult mathematics problem while listening to music through headphones.

Their lexicon differs from any accepted form of language; it consists of slang expressions that have become popular as a result of globalization.

For example, the term 'Slay' means to perform or look exceptionally good, while 'Cooked' conveys exhaustion or serious trouble; additionally, if you thought 'sick' referred to being unwell, you are mistaken, as for Gen Z it means extremely impressive or 'cool' (and if you thought 'cool' was the opposite of 'hot,' that is also a misunderstanding!). That is how they speak bro. Their language defines their "culture and attitude."

Since this generation is born in the digital-social media consciousness, which brings features like infinite scrolling and quantified social validation, it exploits human psychology to create addictive habit loops. This generation is the most impressionable and gullible, an ideal target and prey for demagogues. The art and science of demagoguery create conditions of us vs. them

and simplify complexities, and it concerns itself with social psychology, behavioral economics, and propaganda studies—perfect grounding for activism and protest.

Constant digital immersion has created significant health challenges for Gen Z. Goodnight is never before 3 am! And they are highly sleep deprived. They report a high level of burnout driven by the "always be hustling" mode. Physical resilience is almost absent in Gen Z, and they constantly look for faster and quicker ways—nothing wrong with it; however, it comes at the cost of their physical endurance.

Companies have not preferred Gen Z, and the issue has been a topic of discussion, particularly in the last 4-5 years; however, the situation is more nuanced than it appears. Gen Z is perhaps changing the rule of employment and work hierarchy. It is, however, intriguing to note that employers consider them lacking in soft skills, having an 'act your wage' mentality, and having high expectations; they prefer shortcuts for quick gains.

Where do we go from here? The Gen Z "business" needs to stop. Each country must visit its own culture and go back to its cultural and spiritual roots. No matter how much the world has 'advanced,' you are always connected to your roots; it is a cultural continuity that must not be broken. Our wisdom traditions have laid out for us a path towards self-mastery and expression, and it is this path that our young generation must endeavor to explore. There is, of course, a disclaimer: we cannot bring the 'old' dictates for the 'new' times—we must discover a way and examples that are inspiring enough for them to look forward to. This task is not simple; "education" and "parenting" must take the first bold step.

-Editor

India, that is Bharat - It's Spirit and Mission

India and Her future: Compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother



The Divine Teacher

In seeking the kernel of the thought of the Gita we need, therefore, only concern ourselves with the spiritual significance of the human-divine Krishna of the Mahabharata, who is presented to us as the teacher of Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. The historical Krishna, no doubt, existed.

We meet the name first in the Chhandogya Upanishad where all we can gather about him is that he was well-known in spiritual tradition as a knower of the Brahman, so well-known indeed in his personality and the circumstances of his life that it was sufficient to refer to him by the name of his mother as Krishna, son of Devaki for all to understand who was meant.

In the same Upanishad we find mention of King Dhritarashtra, son of Vichitravirya, and since tradition associated the two together so closely that they are both of them leading personages in the action of the Mahabharata, we may fairly conclude that they were actually contemporaries and that the epic is to a great extent dealing with historical characters and in the war of Kurukshetra with a historical occurrence imprinted firmly on the memory of the race.

We know too that Krishna and Arjuna were the object of religious worship in the pre-Christian centuries ;

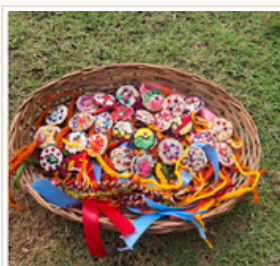
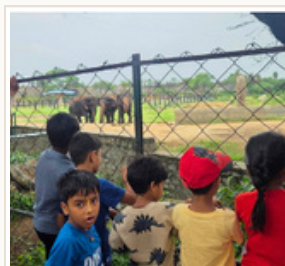
and there is some reason to suppose that they were so in connection with a religious and philosophical tradition from which the Gita

may have gathered many of its elements and even the foundation of its synthesis of knowledge, devotion and works, and perhaps also that the human Krishna was the founder, restorer or at the least one of the early teachers of this school.

The Gita may well in spite of its later form represent the outcome in Indian thought of the teaching of Krishna and the connection of that teaching with the historical Krishna, with Arjuna and with the war of Kurukshetra may be something more than a dramatic fiction. In the Mahabharata, Krishna is represented both as the historical character and the Avatar; his worship and Avatarhood must therefore have been well established by the time—apparently from the fifth to the first centuries B.C.—when the old story and poem or epic tradition of the Bharatas took its present form. There is a hint also in the poem of the story or legend of the Avatar's early life in Vrindavan which, as developed by the Puranas into an intense and powerful spiritual symbol, has exercised so profound an influence on the religious mind of India. We have also in the Harivansha, an account of the life of Krishna, very evidently full of legends which perhaps formed the basis of the Puranic accounts.

At The Integral School

A glimpse into the joyful learning, discovery and creativity that shape our children's days at The Integral School.



MOVEMENT • DISCOVERY • IMAGINATIVE PLAY

Progress & Courage

August was filled with movement, discovery and imaginative play for Progress and Courage. A mid-month visit to the zoo brought children close to wild animals and fish, sparking curiosity and delight. During physical education, energetic games such as Ice and Water and Yellow Duck, White Duck encouraged wholehearted participation. When the weather permitted, children also enjoyed Out-Out, running races and other outdoor play. In the classroom, they gradually moved into number work, practising addition and subtraction mentally and with objects, while Courage continued dot-book activities twice weekly. New indoor materials—including wooden puzzles, kitchen sets, strings and beads—were welcomed enthusiastically. Combined with favourite wooden blocks, these inspired children to build shops and restaurants, invent roles and serve imaginary customers. Frequent free drawing and painting supported fine-motor development and self-expression. Children performed action songs for Sri Aurobindo's birthday, created a collective chart-paper gift, and made rakhis using cloth, paper and wool.

LANGUAGE • MATHEMATICS • CREATIVE INQUIRY

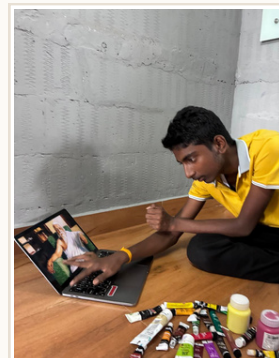
Aspiration

August was a month of joyful learning and celebration for Aspiration. The children prepared for Independence Day with a patriotic song and marked Rakshabandhan by making clay rakhis and tying them to one another. In English, they explored adjectives, prepositions, gender, countable and uncountable nouns, poetry and similes, while summarising The 7 Habits of Happy Kids. Mathematics came alive through multiplication, division, polygons, triangles, quadrilaterals, perimeter, area and colourful polygon art. In Tamil, children learned the days of the week, explored words beginning with given letters, and recited poems and moral verses. In Telugu, they watched a story about Lord Krishna, identified letters in newspaper titles, and practised reading and writing two- and three-letter words. They were also reintroduced to Guninthaalu through a craft activity. Their plant project explored seed germination and growth measurement, while mandalas, paper flowers, thread braiding, patterns and mridangam classes nurtured creativity, precision, imagination and concentration.

HERITAGE • LANGUAGE • MEANINGFUL MAKING

Gratitude

August brought Gratitude a vibrant blend of celebration, learning and creativity. Through a project on ten legendary Indian rulers, children explored their lives, qualities and contributions, presenting one ruler each during the Independence Day celebration. They also studied milestones from Sri Aurobindo's life and prepared an exhibition display. In English, Krishna's childhood in Vrindavan inspired revision of parts of speech, story reading and growing dictionary use. Children read Krishna and Sudha Murty stories, discussed July newsletter articles and maintained spelling logs. In Telugu, they memorised a short poem, practised Guninthaalu and prepared two- to five-letter words for their word boxes. Telugu speakers were encouraged to converse in their mother tongue and rediscover older words from parents and grandparents. Mathematics strengthened multiplication and division at individual levels. Children embroidered four rakhis each, painted the Pink Morning Glory, The Mother's "Gratitude Flower", and concluded their Animal Project by creating imaginative clay animals.



HERITAGE • SCIENCE • INVENTIVE HANDWORK

Humility

August beautifully blended patriotism, creativity and academic rigour for Humility. Together with Goodness, the children staged Sri Aurobindo's poem Who with dedication and contributed charts highlighting different aspects of his life to an inspiring Independence Day exhibition. Raksha Bandhan celebrations encouraged inventive handwork: the girls crocheted elegant rakhis, while the boys used 3D pens to create designs featuring an initial as the centrepiece. The second phase of their long-term project on UNESCO World Heritage Sites was completed and prepared for presentation. Lively quizzes reinforced scientific and social-science vocabulary, spellings, abbreviations, multiplication tables from two to twelve, and map knowledge of Indian states, capitals, continents and oceans. In Science, children completed a skeletal-system model, studied bones and joints, and were introduced to the parts and functions of the nervous system. Mathematics progressed through decimals, fraction-decimal conversions, problem-solving, fractions, geometry, BODMAS, HCF and LCM, bringing focused challenge and discovery to the month.

REFLECTION • SCIENCE • DISCOVERY

Goodness

August was a month of meaningful churning for Goodness, gently drawing out the children's strengths while nurturing mind and body. Together with Humility, they recited, directed and performed a play based on Sri Aurobindo's poem Who for his birth anniversary. Their enthusiastic rehearsals, graceful participation and individual contributions culminated in a warmly appreciated presentation. Through the "Garden of Qualities," abstract nouns became an inward and creative exploration. Following a quiet meditation, children imagined gardens where they felt safe, peaceful and happy, named the qualities they discovered, and transformed their inner landscapes into art. Geography introduced the movement of major and minor tectonic plates, including the Indo-Australian Plate's role in forming the Himalayas and the separation of the Somali and Nubian plates. In History, children explored the advent of the Aryans and subsequent socio-cultural developments. They also began researching "HerStory," independently choosing fields that inspired them and discovering women whose contributions mattered. Children's learning also included experiments comparing the pH values of various substances. They observed flowering butterfly pea plants and other plants around the school. A plant-mapping activity is underway, documenting the locations and names of plants surrounding the Goodness classroom and helping the children identify previously unknown plants. Topics studied also included a revision of selected organ systems, pH, the meniscus, solutions and ecosystems.

MATHEMATICS • REASONING • CONFIDENCE

Equality

Throughout August, the Equality group focused on connecting mathematics with real-world situations. The children learned to read problem statements attentively, identify the information provided, recognise what needed to be found, and translate each situation into a mathematical equation. Rather than rushing towards an answer, they were encouraged to pause, understand the problem and decide which mathematical operation or process would lead them towards an appropriate solution. An important part of this learning was understanding that solving an equation is not the final step. The children were introduced to the process of verifying their solutions by revisiting the original problem, checking their calculations and considering whether the answer made sense within the given context. This approach helped them view mathematics not merely as a series of calculations, but as a practical language for thinking through everyday challenges. It also nurtured careful reading, logical reasoning, accuracy, patience and confidence in approaching problems independently.



A space for questions that matter...

Integral Dialogues is a reflective conversation series exploring the questions shaping human life – from education, parenting and technology to consciousness and culture. Rooted in contemporary realities and India's traditional wisdom, it invites us to look beyond easy answers and examine the future we are creating.



EPISODE 01

Singularity and Society

Is the technological singularity leading humanity toward an AI-dominated future? This episode explores artificial intelligence, transhumanism and the impact of technological evolution on human beings, alongside Sri Aurobindo's idea of the evolution of consciousness and contrasting visions of the future.



EPISODE 02

Can Education Still Create Human Beings?

What is the deeper purpose of education in an age shaped by AI, rapid change and economic pressures? Should education merely prepare children for the workforce – or help them become conscious, compassionate and creative human beings? The conversation examines human uniqueness, the evolving role of teachers, new approaches to assessment and the crisis of consciousness in education. Ultimately, it asks: who should lead the transformation toward a truly human future?



EPISODE 03

The Words That Shape Our Reality

Words such as intelligence, consciousness, freedom, love, education and truth shape how we think, communicate and live. But what if we attach different meanings to the same words? Could many disagreements begin not with our beliefs, but with our definitions? This episode explores how language shapes our perception of reality and why clarity of meaning is essential for genuine dialogue.



EPISODE 04

Do Our Children Belong to Us?

What if the most important question in parenting is not, 'How do we raise our children?' but, 'How do we truly see them?' This conversation explores whether children are an extension of parental expectations or unique individuals with their own purpose, intelligence and journey. It examines parenting without ownership, how self-understanding shapes our relationships with children, and why conscious parenting may be one of the greatest challenges of our time.



EPISODE 05

Can Intelligence Be Artificial?

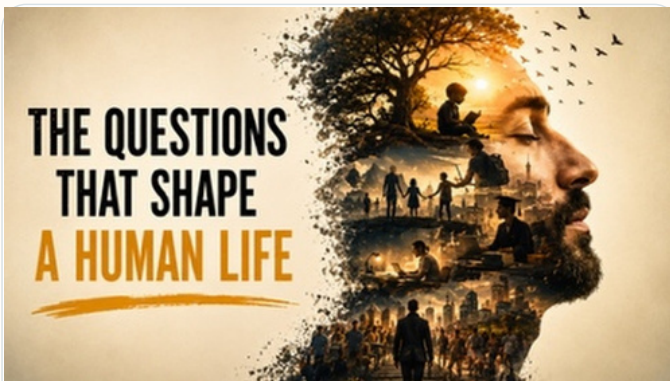
Everyone is talking about artificial intelligence – but what if the deeper question is what intelligence itself really means? This episode looks beyond computation to explore large language models, children's growing digital dependence, and why parents and community matter more than ever.



EPISODE 06

Are Trends Dead?

The world may no longer be changing through isolated trends, but through convergence, emergence and multidimensional forces interacting with one another. The conversation explores what this means for learning, decision-making, schooling, psychology, identity and the economy.



EPISODE 07

The Questions That Shape a Human Life

What are the fundamental questions that shape how we understand ourselves and our lives? Drawing from the Upanishads, the Gita and India's wider wisdom traditions, the conversation explores inquiry, consciousness, self-mastery and what it means to live more consciously.



EPISODE 08

Who Is Shaping Our Future?

The future is not simply something that happens to us. It is shaped by technology, economics, education, culture, media, institutions, families – and the choices we make every day. From the changing nature of work, synthetic reality and cultural change to childhood, education and the growing distance between parents and children, this episode asks: what forces are shaping the human being of tomorrow?



EPISODE 09

Beyond the War: Entering the Mahabharata

This introductory journey enters one of the world's most layered and fascinating texts – its many characters, contexts, contradictions and meanings. The Mahabharata is not simply a story of good versus evil, or Pandavas versus Kauravas. It opens questions about dharma and adharma, destiny and human effort, power and self-interest, choice and consequence.

Blissful Butterflies

While visiting Bangalore University, Granthali captured these beautiful images. The fact that these butterflies bear the “imprints of other species” is quite remarkable. Spectacular and serene, the hue palette is sure to soothe.



Blue Tiger



Indian Jezebel



Common Mormon – Female



Striped Tiger



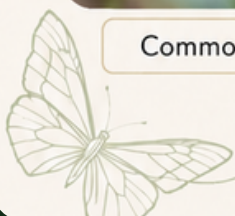
Common Crow



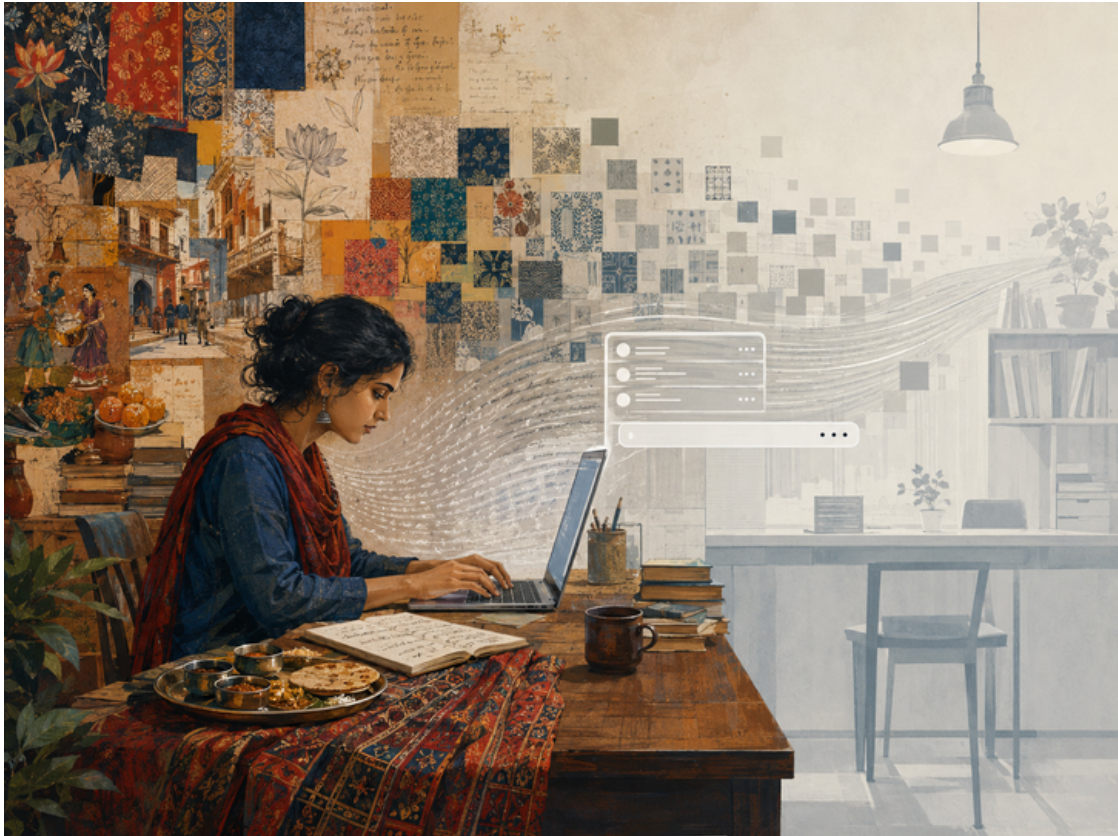
Common Leopard



Common Grass Yellow



Is AI Flattening Culture?



A 2025 Cornell study involving Indian and American participants found that AI writing assistance made their writing more alike—largely by pulling Indian expression towards generic Western styles and reducing culturally specific details.

As AI helps billions of people write faster, could it also quietly standardize our language—and eventually, how cultures understand and describe themselves?

Source: <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2025/04/ai-suggestions-make-writing-more-generic-western?utm>

Invitations to notice



Your phone may command attention without making a sound
Researchers found that the mere presence of a smartphone could
reduce attention and cognitive performance—even when
participants were not using it.

Invitation to notice: When your phone lies beside you, is a part of your
attention still waiting for it?

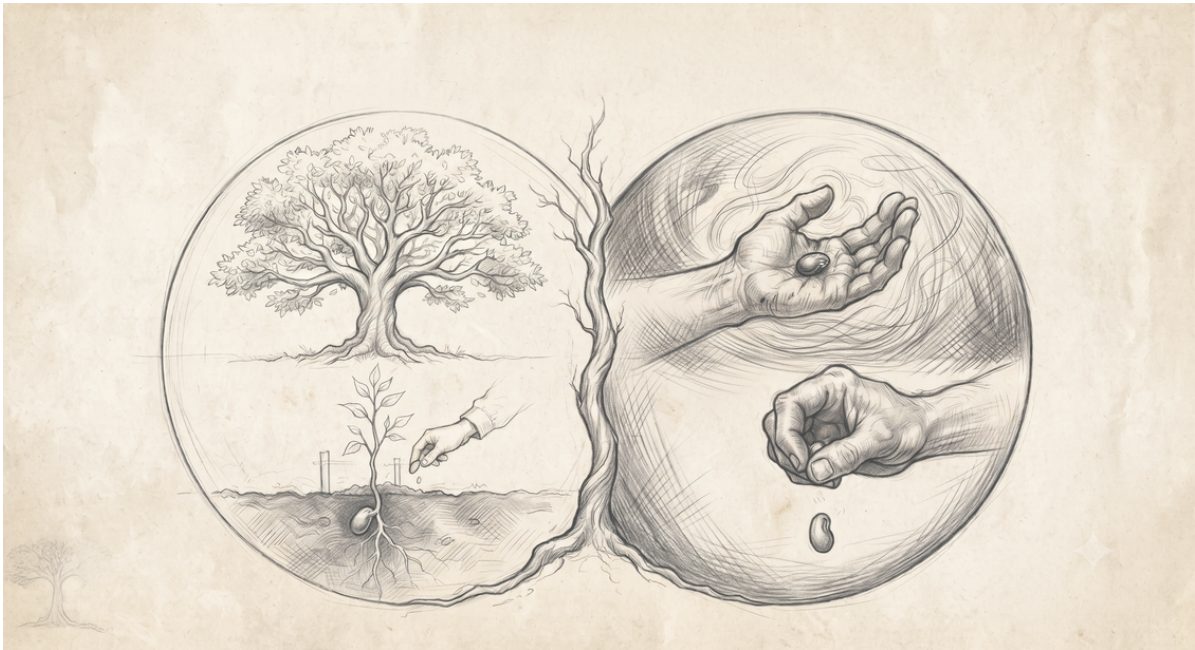
Source: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-36256-4?utm_

Dharma

Dharma : धर्म

Literally that which one lays hold of and which holds things together; Law, law of being, standard of Truth

A Parable



The Two Seeds

A farmer found two seeds lying beside the road. He planted the first in rich soil, watered it every morning, protected it from the wind, and watched it grow. It became a strong, beautiful tree. The second seed he carried with him, afraid to plant it.

What if the soil is poor? What if the rain doesn't come?

What if it fails?

Years passed.

One day, the farmer looked at the seed still in his hand. It was exactly as he had found it.



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CFIL's Expressions:



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